Met Office

March 2004

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Another month with above average mean temperatures, across the whole of the UK. Most areas experienced below average rainfall, and it was much sunnier than average across northern and western areas.

Northolt (London) recorded a temperature of 20.1 °C on the 31st. Aboyne (Aberdeenshire) recorded a temperature of -12.0 °C on the 2nd.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Mostly changeable and rather dry overall. Often rather cold, however some days became very warm. Most places saw snow before the middle of the month and severe gales on the 20th.

1st to 2nd
High pressure brought good sunny periods and widespread overnight frost, severe in places, -11.7 °C was noted at Redesdale / northern England on the 1st.

3rd to 7th
A changeable spell, as Atlantic fronts crossed the region bringing occasional rain and showers. There was some fog later, persistent in places in Yorkshire on the 5th. Showers turned thundery in the east and south-east later.

8th to 10th
High pressure re-established itself then moved to Scandinavia. There were good sunny periods and some overnight frost, but the northerly winds veered easterly dragging in colder air and some snow showers later in the east.

11th to 14th
A deep depression swept fronts north-east across the region during the 11th and 12th, preceded by sleet and snow in many parts, especially over high ground. There were several centimetres in a number of places early on the 12th and some thunder reported from south-west England. Milder on 13th and 14th but with rain and showers especially in the west; showers turned thundery in the south-east on the 13th.

15th to 17th
High pressure sat nearby over Europe allowing weak weather bands to graze the region. There was occasional light rain in western areas. It became exceptionally warm with Cleethorpes/northeast Lincolnshire reaching 18.7 °C on the 16th and there were good sunny periods especially in the east and south-east

18th to 25th
More unsettled as a deep complex area of low pressure to the north drifted to Scandinavia. Winds veered slowly from westerly to northerly with severe gales affecting many areas during the 19th to 21st especially on the 20th when Aberdaron/North Wales gusted to 87 knots. Eastern areas became very warm on the 20th. Showers were fairly widespread at times from the 21st, some becoming heavy with hail and thunder, however the sun shone in between. Generally rather cold later, with some overnight frost, and a little sleet or snow in places on the 25th.

26th to 29th

Mostly dull with patchy mist and fog as a weak front moved very slowly south-east across the region. Some outbreaks of rain and drizzle gave way during the 29th to brighter drier conditions and warmer temperatures.

30th to 31st

Closing days were very sunny dry and exceptionally warm over much of England and Wales after the quick clearance of early morning patchy mist or fog. Northolt (London) reached 20.1 °C on the 31st, however a brisk easterly breeze would have placed North Sea coastal resorts in the chilly category.

Scotland diary of highlights

Mild, dry and sunny.

A large anticyclone over England gave a sunny day on the 1st with the temperature at Aboyne dropping to -12 °C during the following night. Fronts advancing from the west brought increasing cloud on the 2nd and slight rain on the 3rd. The next three days experienced broken cloud, with showers in the north, as light south-westerly winds veered into the north-west.

Another anticyclone moved east across Scotland on the 7th and 8th, bringing more sunny weather with frosty nights. The high moved slowly into the North Sea on the 9th and 10th with cloud returning to places away from the north-west.

An unsettled spell began on the 11th and 12th as strong south-easterly winds blew across Scotland. There was a gust of 61 m.p.h. at Machrihanish and temperatures at Eskdalemuir reached only 3 °C.

Low pressure dominated the weather for a week from the 13th, bringing much wind and rain. On the 14th gusts reached 73 m.p.h. at South Uist and there were 35 mm of rain at Sloy. On the 16th very mild and humid air crossed Scotland, allowing the temperature at Kinloss and Lossiemouth to reach 18 °C. Meanwhile there was 32 mm of rain at Lusa on Skye. The next two days were showery, with strong winds gradually dying down.

Colder air reached Scotland on the 19th and prevailed for a week, with winds veering from west to north. Bands of rain crossed the country on the 19th and 20th, with snow for a time in the central belt on the 19th. From the 21st to the 25th there were sunny periods everywhere, with showers in the north.

Mild air spread across Scotland on the 26th, and cloud breaks to the lee of the hills allowed the temperature to rise to 16 °C at Leuchars and Strathallan. A couple of showery westerly days followed, before high pressure built north from England to Scandinavia on the 29th. This brought a spell of fine weather, with the temperature rising to 17 °C at Aultbea on the 31st.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Mild and sunny.

1st to 13th

With the exception of some showers around the 2nd/3rd much of the period was dominated by high pressure. This brought much fine, dry weather with abundant amounts of sunshine. Nights were cold however and frost was widespread and locally quite severe with minimum's typically -3 to - 5 °C on some nights.

14th to 22nd

This period became increasingly disturbed as Atlantic depressions affected the area. Showers or longer spells of rain affected many places and the bulk of the monthly rainfall fell in this period with many places recording between 50 and 70 mm in a nine-day period. The wettest period occurred around the 18th and 19th when 25 mm or more occurred widely. It was also very windy at times, especially around the 18th and more particularly on the 20th when severe gales brought gusts 65 - 75 m.p.h. These winds caused some damage to trees and

buildings and brought temporary power supply problems. Rain turned to snow for a time on the morning of the 20th on some northern hills.

23rd to 31st

High pressure became re-established and although nights were still chilly with ground frost, days were often fine with plenty of sunshine. Temperatures rose above average with values between 13 and 15 °C in the closing days of the month

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